

VZCZCXR06895
OO RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #4031 2650850
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 220850Z SEP 06
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3107
INFO RUEHZS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUCPDOC/USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS MANILA 004031

SIPDIS

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DEPT FOR EB/CIP AND EAP/MTS
USDOC FOR 4430/ITA/MAC/ SBERLINGUETTE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [ECPS](#) [ETRD](#) [EINV](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR AND PRESIDENT ARROYO INAUGURATE U.S. CALL CENTER IN MANILA

¶11. Summary: The Ambassador joined President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in cutting the ribbon for a new U.S. call center. Call centers infused \$1.12 billion into the Philippine economy, and the Philippines has captured 20% of the world call center market. Industry projections foresee dramatic growth over the next five years. End Summary.

¶12. Pennsylvania-based ICT Group opened its third call center in Manila on September 22, 2006. President Arroyo, the Ambassador, and ICT Group CEO John Brennan, along with numerous dignitaries, celebrated the inauguration of this 1600-employee call center, which nearly doubles the number of ICT Group's employees in the Philippines. Brennan commented that the ICT Group intends to open two more call centers and increase staffing to 7,000 by the end of ¶2007. He called the performance of the Filipino workers "of the highest quality." The Ambassador and President Arroyo witnessed this quality first-hand during a tour of the facility.

¶13. President Arroyo strongly supports the rapidly expanding call center industry that employed 112,000 people in 2005, infusing \$1.12 billion into the Philippine economy. Growth projections are especially impressive. In 2000, Philippine call centers employed 2400 people and contributed \$24 million to the economy. By 2010 industry forecasters believe there could be more than a million Filipinos employed in call centers, bringing in projected revenues of over \$12 billion. The Philippines currently controls 20% of the world's call-center market, according to the Asian Call Center Review.

Kenney